

Message Text

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17

ACTION ARA-10

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-10

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CIEP-02 STR-04 /105 W

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R 252002Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8157

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

UNCLAS CARACAS 3308

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR VE MX PN JM US BL OAS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT PEREZ RETURNS TO VENEZUELA

1. PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ ARRIVED BACK IN VENEZUELA LATE MARCH 24 FROM A SEVEN-DAY VISIT TO MEXICO AND PANAMA. ON THE RETURN JOURNEY FROM PANAMA PEREZ STOPPED IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA WHERE HE CONFERRED WITH JAMAICAN PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY FOR THREE HOURS.

2. PEREZ MADE NO ARRIVAL STATEMENT FOLLOWING HIS RETURN. HOWEVER, IN TALK WITH REPORTERS ABOARD THE PRESIDENTIAL AIR-CRAFT REPORTED IN THE CARACAS PRESS MARCH 25 PEREZ SAID HE CONSIDERED HIS TRIP TO HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS. PEREZ SAID HE BELIEVED A GREAT ADVANCE FOR INTEGRATION HAD BEEN ACHIEVED. "THE TREATY WHICH HAS DIVIDED COLOMBIA AND PANAMA WAS BURIED IN PANAMA, THANKS TO VENEZUELA'S AND COSTA RICA'S INTERVENTION,"
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PEREZ ADDED. CONCERNING THE PANAMA CANAL, PEREZ SAID, "I

FEEL PROUD, NOT AS THE PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA NOR AS A POLITICAL LEADER, AT HAVING BEEN THE CRAFTSMAN OF THE AGREEMENT. BEFORE ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGRESS OF PANAMA IS CELEBRATED WE WANT THE PROBLEM WITH THE UNITED STATES TO BE RESOLVED AND THE CANAL TO BE COMPLETELY IN PANAMANIAN HANDS."

3. PEREZ ALSO REFERRED TO TWO SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN HIS TALKS MARCH 17-22 WITH MEXICAN PRESIDENT LUIS ECHEVERRIA. PEREZ SAID HE AND ECHEVERRIA HAD AGREED ON THE REFORMS WHICH SHOULD BE MADE TO THE OAS -- "IDEOLOGICAL PLURALISM AND A CHANGE IN THE OAS SO THAT A TWO-THIRDS VOTE IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS AND A SIMPLE MORITY VOTE TO REMOVE THEM." THE SECOND ACHIEVEMENT, PEREZ SAID, WAS HIS AND ECHEVERRIA'S AGREEMENT ON THE NEED FOR THE "LATIN AMERICANIZATION" OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK SO THAT "THE VIEWS OF LATIN AMERICA ARE GIVEN MORE WEIGHT THAN THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES." PEREZ SAID THE CONTRARY HAD BEEN THE CASE UP TO NOW, "WITH OBVIOUS DAMAGE FOR OUR PEOPLES."

4. ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD TRAVEL TO BOLIVIA FOR ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, PEREZ ANSWERED INDIRECTLY SAYING VENEZUELA SHOULD GIVE IT THE IMPORTANCE IT DESERVED AS BOLIVIA HAD BEEN CREATED BY BOLIVAR. HE INDICATED VENEZUELA AND BOLIVIA WILL SIGN AN AGRICULTURAL AGREEMENT BY WHICH VENEZUELA WILL PURCHASE FROM BOLIVIA WHEAT WHICH UP TO NOW IT HAS PURCHASED FROM THE U.S. PEREZ INDICATED THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD COVER PURCHASES TOTALLING BS. 10 MILLION (\$2.34 MILLION).

5. COMMENT. FOR PEREZ'S RETURN FROM HIS LATEST TRIP THE GOV ESCHEWED A MAMMOTH WELCOMING RECEPTION SUCH AS IT STAGED FOR PEREZ'S RETURN FROM THE ALGIERS OPEC SUMMIT EARLIER THIS MONTH. THIS WAS PROBABLY DUE TO UNCERTAINTY OVER PEREZ'S ARRIVAL TIME AND THE FACT THAT MUCH OF CARACAS' POPULACE DEPARTED THE CITY OVER THE PAST WEEKEND IN ANTICIPATION OF THE HOLY WEEK HOLIDAYS AT THE END OF THIS WEEK. ALTHOUGH IT WAS ORIGINALLY THOUGHT PEREZ WOULD STOP IN TRINIDAD BEFORE RETURNING TO VENEZUELA, IT WAS ANNOUNCED MARCH 21 IN MEXICO CITY THAT THE TRINIDADIAN STOPOVER HAD BEEN SCRUBBED. NO REASON WAS GIVEN.

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